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1995 adds up to a Healthy Community

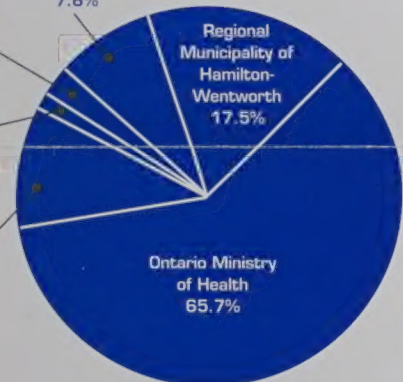
- 1,072 expectant parents registered for pre-natal classes
- 6,956 teens and school staff participated in interactive group sessions
- 4,329 contacts with people with serious mental illness
- 935 people referred to Alcohol and Drug Assessment Services
- 76,500 doses of influenza vaccine distributed
- 5,700 assessments, consultations and visits provided by Child and Adolescent Services
- 14,311 total visits or phone consultations with adults about health
- 4,999 residents attended nutrition education sessions
- 22 cases of tuberculosis confirmed with no fatalities
- 40,059 children and parents attended educational presentations and self-help groups
- 904 bacterial water samples taken
- 2,760 home care visits to adults, seniors and their families
- 7,577 clean needles and 5,280 condoms distributed
- 3,100 restaurants, cafeterias and supermarkets inspected

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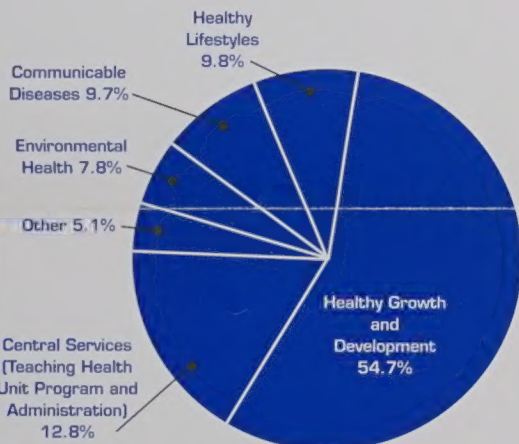
Where we got our funding...

How we spent it ...

Ministry of Environment and Energy 0.6%
City of Hamilton and Stoney Creek 0.2%
Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services 8.5%User Fees/Revenues 7.6%Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth 17.5%Ontario Ministry of Health 65.7%



Total Revenue: \$17,035,020



Total Expenditures: \$17,035,020

Front Cover Photo:

Public health inspector Eric Matthews leads an education session on infection control. Public Health works closely with staff in hospitals, nursing homes, and other community institutions to help prevent the spread of infection and disease.

Something to Talk About...

The telephone is a powerful instrument when it comes to creating a healthy community. Public Health was never more sure of that than in 1995 when the community kept the phones ringing off the hook in search of health information. Here's a tally of last year's calls to some of our many different phone lines.

How can I help you?

of calls Phone

Parent Child Information Line	3,948	546-3618
Healthy Kids Phone Line	1,449	546-3596
Nutrition & Physical Activity Information	3,688	546-3630
Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) Infoline	1,506	528-5894
Environmental Health Concerns	~60,000	546-3570
Central Intake (Nursing) Services	5,396	546-3550

THE HAMILTON-WENTWORTH REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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The Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Public Health Department works under the governance of the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Council, and is a Teaching Health Unit affiliated with McMaster University and University of Guelph.



6,809 Toothy Grins Saved

Public Health's Dental Services Program checked out nearly 41,000 smiles in 1995. And as they were screening the community's children for dental disease, they identified 6,809 kids whose toothy grins were in urgent need of dental care.

Detection is only the beginning for some children. Paying for dental care continues to be a tough issue for many families. Last year, 1,614 children received financial assistance for urgently needed dental care through the provincially funded Children In Need of Dental Treatment (CINOT) program. Ability to pay for dental care will continue to be an issue for as many as one-quarter of the families of children with urgent dental care needs in this community. The Dental Services staff will continue to do their part to keep the community's kids smiling.

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Working Together For Good Health

The Hamilton-Wentworth Public Health Department

1995 Annual Report

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS

A HEALTHY COMMUNITY STARTS WITH HEALTHY PARTNERSHIPS. In 1995, the Regional Public Health Department forged more new partnerships in the community than ever before.

One kind of partnership that grew last year was with the people who provide peer support to those in the same age group, or with the same cultural backgrounds or interests as themselves. Public Health staff trained everyone from teens to seniors to facilitate groups which ranged from providing good nutrition for new babies to suicide bereavement. We know that people get more out of talking to their peers than well-intentioned strangers. And when peers provide support, we make better use of our funding dollars. Simply, we can help more people this way.

As a Teaching Health Unit, we've teamed up with McMaster University's Faculty of Health Sciences and the University of Guelph's Department of Family Studies. This partnership had us involved in an unprecedented level of research last year. That research in turn improved the kind of services we provided to the community.

Other partnerships brought brand new challenges. In 1995, we began enforcing the Tobacco Control Act for the first time in conjunction with Ontario's Ministry of Health. We're already seeing results: prior to implementation of the act, 50 per cent of area retailers were willing to sell cigarettes to minors. After it was in enforcement for two months, that number dropped to 29 per cent.

Working with everyone from boards of education to citizens groups and individuals, we've found a healthy community requires partnerships that constantly evolve and improve. Our Public Health staff are on the front lines of keeping these partnerships dynamic — and we must commend their excellent work last year. This annual report highlights some of the most significant achievements.

In 1996 and beyond, we will continue to strengthen the partnerships that help us reduce the barriers to basic health needs, create opportunities for better health for everyone, and prevent injury and disease.

Working together, we can keep the community healthy.

DR. MARILYN JAMES
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

TED MCMECKIN
MAYOR OF FLAMBOROUGH & CHAIR, HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT



Good Parenting Breaks Down Barriers

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A PEER MAKES. It's not enough that they speak your language — though that's a good start. A peer understands what you're going through because they've been there themselves.

Since 1994, the Healthy Growth and Development Branch has been a partner in an exciting new project called Parents Helping Parents. In 1995, the program trained seven immigrant women from different cultural and language backgrounds to become "Resource Mothers" for their community. For families in socially isolated situations who are faced with language barriers, a visit from a Resource Mother is like a visit from a neighbour — one who can give support on a tough parenting issue, or offer good advice on family



nutrition and safety.

Resource Mothers visited 32 families in their own homes last year, to promote healthy growth and development and help put families in touch with other resources available in the community.

In 1995, Parents Helping

Nurse Kathy Doering (right) offers some advice on baby care during a visit with a new mom.

Parents offered services in Arabic, Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Serbian, Croatian, Polish, Vietnamese and Cambodian, extending the message of good parenting across the language divide.

Teens Talk It Up

Surveys and focus groups last year told us teens are more comfortable, and more effective, tackling sensitive issues if they are with their peers and not their authority figures. Public Health listened. In 1995, public health nurses helped Hamilton-Wentworth teens

become better group facilitators. And then let them get talking — on issues such as sexuality, bereavement, anger management and the effects of separation and divorce. Seventeen groups got together and 159 teens in total talked it up last year.

VITALITY HITS THE CLASSROOM

Healthy eating. Active living. Healthy body image. It's a three-part message that delivers vitality to youngsters — and the Healthy Lifestyles Branch brought it into Hamilton's classrooms in a unique way last year. Staff worked with teachers and students to develop two packages of worksheets, take-home materials and background information that would promote healthy eating and regular physical activity among 11 to 14-year-olds. The result: "Getting There is Half the Fun" and "Choosing an Active, Healthy Lifestyle." Both packages are user-friendly, easy to photocopy and fit in three-ring binders. They deliver an upbeat, up-to-date message: healthy eating and active living are incomplete without a good body image and acceptance of yourself and others. "Getting There is Half the Fun" and "Choosing an Active, Healthy Lifestyle" were distributed to all three local boards of education last year. And the vitality message, which is part of both packages, is expected to get even wider distribution in 1996.

PUTTING RESEARCH TO WORK

Research is the silent partner in everything Public Health does — the partner that works from the inside making the delivery of

services more effective.

As a Teaching Health Unit, your Regional Public Health Department attracted an extra \$1.7 million of external funding for research from local, provincial, national and international sources.

That allows Public Health staff to ask some compelling questions. And get some answers. For instance, When the Bough Breaks is a five-year study of 750 families in Hamilton-Wentworth and Halton that will evaluate the effectiveness of public health nurses' work with families on social assistance. Research such as this shapes how Public Health delivers its services in the future. And through publications such as Infowatch, circulated to 4,000 health professionals in the community three times yearly, the results of the department's research are shared with many decision makers within Public Health and beyond.

Through its activities as a Teaching Health Unit, Public Health puts research, education and program development to work for the benefit of the entire community.

Social worker Rosemary Hilbert is a member of the team that provides assessment and counseling for people with drug and alcohol addictions. Through research, Public Health is able to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of its community services.

FESTIVALS, FOOD AND SAFETY

Outdoor festivals can keep a public health inspector up at night. So when you live in a region known as Festival Country, working in food safety makes for a busy summer (and some sleepless nights). Every year, 150 outdoor festivals keep food safety inspectors from the Environmental Health Branch working hard to ensure food sold at festivals is properly prepared and stored, volunteer staff are well trained, lots of fresh safe drinking water is available and there are suitable arrangements for garbage and sewage disposal at each event. It takes a lot of organization to keep the crowds happy — and healthy too.

That's just one way this branch of Public Health ensures a healthy environment for the whole community. In addition to inspecting restaurants, cafeterias and supermarkets, staff from the Environmental Health Branch enforce legislation on tobacco and food safety, ensure rabies control for the region, and monitor swimming water quality at public beaches and pools, among other safety measures.

Last year, Environmental Health also worked closely with the citizens of Stoney Creek to deal with public concerns about the proposed Taro Aggregates landfill site. And of course, they helped keep the food safe in Festival Country.

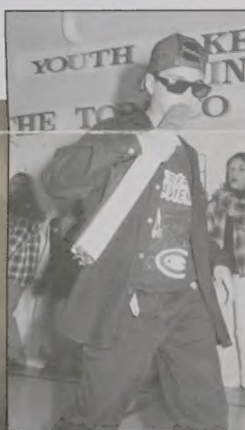


Public health inspectors, such as Kelly Fraser, routinely visit local supermarkets and restaurants to ensure that food is safely stored and prepared

PROJECT HELPS KIDS BUTT OUT

It's not good news. According to the Healthy Lifestyle Branch's 1995 Student Health Survey, 47 per cent of students in grades six to nine had tried cigarettes and 18 per cent were currently smoking.

But the Comprehensive School-Based Tobacco Use Prevention Pilot Project



is a good news story. The project has been a two-year collaboration between Public Health, the Lung Association of Hamilton-Wentworth, three local schools and the Landsdale Citizen Action Group.

For the last two years, the Pilot Project has aimed to prevent tobacco use and support those kids who wanted to stop smoking.

Last year, it used a variety of tactics to achieve its

goals — everything from classroom education, school smoking policy enforcement, school and community awareness activities, field trips and support for smokers wanting to quit. In 1996, Public Health and its partners will use the knowledge gained

from this pilot project to help principals of other schools decide which strategies they'll use to prevent tobacco use and help those students who do smoke, to stop. Now that's good news!

Public Health is involved in a comprehensive program aimed at preventing tobacco use among school kids.

TAKING CARE OF MOM, DAD, PARTNER

It's a tough job by any measure. Due to an aging population and a slow shift toward more health care at home, there are increasing demands on the informal caregivers of seniors — the family members or friends who take on the lion's share of caring for the elderly with health problems. Three quarters of these informal caregivers are women while the number of men providing care is on the rise.

Last year, the Healthy Growth and Development Branch brought together four informal caregivers from our community to form the Caregiver Advisory Committee. This committee has a challenging mandate. The Caregiver Advisory Committee is developing community partnerships, facilitating groups and workshops for caregivers and preparing literature on caregiver issues. They're also identifying the important public health issues for informal caregiving and letting the right people know about them. The changing dynamics of modern families and the aging of caregivers themselves is pushing the needs of informal caregivers higher on the public health agenda. Initiatives such as the Caregiver Advisory Committee are a first step toward answering those needs.



Measles Makes a Comeback

In the beginning of 1995, it was clear that measles was on the upsurge in our community. Public Health's Communicable Diseases Program sprung into action.

Last year, 13,000 student immunization records were reviewed, 44 measles immunization clinics were provided and the ground was laid for

a mass measles immunization campaign in 1996. By the end of the year, 298 cases of measles were investigated and confirmed by Public Health.

Measles were just the tip of the iceberg.

Case by case, the Communicable Diseases Program tracked, investigated and followed up everything from

hepatitis B to E. coli infections and tuberculosis. Immunization has been a cornerstone of this program's work and staff were on the job last year protecting the community from many diseases including influenza, polio, pertussis, mumps and measles. They were also providing education and public awareness to keep the community disease and infection free.